



a newsletter from Stevens, Shanks & Sons Ltd

As the first 'Survivals & Revivals' leaflet was received with some interest by our friends at home and abroad, we have decided to bring out further issues from time to time under the same title. In future, however, we shall not deal only with the revival of old type faces, as we wish to produce a newsletter of more general interest. As indication of this, the text is hand set in 8pt Gill 262, letters individually cast by us in hard foundry metal.

Survivals & Revivals No. 2



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Fuerst



The interest in the type faces of the last century has recently given rise in various quarters to the most inept & grotesque attempts to capture the spirit of the great Regency & Victorian punchcutters.

Slightly depressed by these efforts, we are reviving two decorated letters, both of which the enthusiast will be able to find in Figgins' 'Specimen of Plain & Ornamental Types' [circa 1850].

The first, Scroll Shaded, will be cast in the two line brevier, two line small pica & two line english sizes on 18, 24 & 30 pt body respectively. The second, Ornamented Outline, originally two line pica, will be on 30 pt body.

figgins' figures

The many people who have written or telephoned to enquire whether figures are cast for Figgins' Shaded will be pleased to learn that these are now available in the 14 & 18 pt sizes. The origins of Figgins' Shaded are obscure, to say the least, but it seems that if any of the four sizes were actually cut by Figgins, it was those which are now on 14 & 18 pt body.

minster black

This face, announced for possible future production in the first 'Survivals & Revivals', is now being cast in response to enquiries in the 12 & 24 pt sizes. The remaining sizes will be made available in due course.

borders & ornaments

Concurrently with this issue we are bringing out a detailed showing, with current prices, of the borders & ornaments shown in the first issue, all of which are now available from stock.

grace or guts

Fashions in type are as unpredictable as those in women's clothes, and as Nicolette Gray has demonstrated, bound up to a great extent with the spirit of the time. Do we have any takers for

Expanded Antique

MERC

Antique 3

MRmsa

Clarence Condensed

MERsmwr

Shanks' Plantin

MRma

Antique 6

MRma

Royal Gothic

MRmr

Elephant

MBma

the proposition that the current interest in all things Victorian is not only a movement of protest against the mechanical, the surgical, the boxlike [in the case of type the compass-and-ruler and the pantograph] but also a nostalgic attempt to escape from our age of anxiety back to a time which now appears to us as one of expansion & security? Many Victorians had a similar attitude to the Middle Ages.

Many of the type faces produced in the typographic revival of the twenties & thirties of the present century were either recuttings of Renaissance designs, or new designs closely modelled on these. Originally, printed on rough papers on hand presses, these types had some body & vigour, but now, with a kiss impression on dead smooth paper, they retain their grace, but have no guts whatever. Much of the work of the most highly respected printers in this country suffers from this graceful lack of bowels. On the Continent and in the USA this does not apply to the same extent, and there appears to be an increase here in the use of heavier types such as Bodoni, in response to a desire for a little more vigour.

Since the war there has also been a considerable increase in the use of offset and gravure, and although you can still be charmed on occasion by the sweet innocence of someone who can specify faces such as Walbaum for gravure, there is a growing demand for heavier types for these processes. Further, advertising spaces in the newspapers are on the way back to their pre-war dimensions, and although many agencies do not seem to have caught on to the idea yet, due no doubt to a form of inertia after having had to use the same old narrow set types for years, wider & bolder types are coming back, many of them with guts and no grace whatever.

With the above in mind, we have brooded over our collection, and offer to the left a selection of faces with vigour, showing distinctive letters only. Alphabet proofs showing all available sizes

of most of these faces, suitable for tracing, are available for interested agencies & typographers on request.

Among the faces shown, Antique 6 is now in stock from 5/6 to 36 pt, and Royal Gothic, used widely on the Continent, but not often seen here, from 6 to 60 pt. Elephant, originally cut about 1815, is available from 10 to 36 pt.

economics

It will be appreciated that the production of a type face is a matter involving considerable time and expense. We were very gratified by the comments & enquiries subsequent to the last issue of 'Survivals & Revivals', and it was as a result of these that we thought it worth while bringing out Minster Black, Ornamented Outline & Scroll Shaded. Therefore we repeat that your interest & enquiries are welcomed here, and that we shall do our utmost to provide satisfactory answers & service.



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Set in Monotype Gill 262, cast in hard foundry metal, with headings in Royal Gothic.
Inks by A. R. Gibbon Ltd

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